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become his younger brothers." Yet Jesus was in some sense "divine," but so is every man that is born into the world. He was a prophet, "one in a long line of revealers to men of the law by which they are called upon to live. He was not the first; he will not be the last . . . he felt himself a link in an endless chain of prophecy. That is precisely Unitarian thought." In the leadership of Jesus, interpreted in their own way, they are satisfied, "for in it they find perfect liberty. It is to them of its very essence that in following it they learn the truth that makes them free."

It is interesting when a historian turns philosopher and theologian—and especially so when he attains to a high degree of efficiency.

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RELIGION FROM THE STANDPOINT OF FUNCTIONAL PSYCHOLOGY*

Whoever has observed the recent growth of the functional treatment of psychology must have realized that profound problems are arising for the science of religion. It is true that we are already accustomed to the idea of an empirical, evolutionary, and voluntaristic treatment of the facts of religion. But it is also true that the full purport of this tendency cannot appear until psychology has secured firm control of its own relatively new evolutionary-voluntaristic standpoint. At none of the university centers has the reconstruction of psychological categories in this direction gone on more actively than at Chicago. Here, accordingly, is the radiating center of an active reconstruction of the psychological standpoint with respect to religion. Irving King's dissertation on *The Differentiation of the Religious Consciousness*,² which has recently been absorbed into his large and mature work on *The Development of Religion*,³ Professor Ames's annual course in the university on the psychology of religion, and now his *Psychology of Religious Experience*—these all represent a single movement of reconstruction.⁴ Or shall we say "construction"? For we are still in the early, formative stages of the psychology of religion. Within the circle of scientific

* *The Psychology of Religious Experience*. By Edward Scribner Ames. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1910. xi+428 pages. \$2.50 net.

² Chicago, 1905.

³ New York: Macmillan, 1910.

⁴ To this list may be added a recent dissertation on *The Psychology of Ritualism*, by F. G. Henke: The University of Chicago Press, 1910.

psychologists the supreme effort in this field at present is to secure a point of view and to clarify fundamental notions. This preliminary work is arduous beyond the dreams of most students in other branches of research in religion.⁵

The significance of foundation-laying books like this of Ames, therefore, is far greater than ordinary readers will realize. In this work and King's we have the beginnings of an attempt to carry empiricism, voluntarism, evolutionism, and a social view of consciousness to their logical limit with respect to religion. The result is bound to seem revolutionary even to many who are hospitable to all these standpoints.

The starting-point for this radical analysis is the concept of function as applied to mental process. If we conceive function, that is, action, with reference to what is advantageous or the opposite, as the determining principle, immediately the whole ideational factor of mental process assumes an unwonted look. For now ideas not only *have* efficiency, they not only *are* motor, but they arise within, evolve from, the acts that are customarily regarded as their consequences. Moreover, in action with reference to satisfactions, ideas acquire their *meaning*, and this meaning, Ames insists, never transcends its source. Ideas and concepts are for him nothing but "abbreviated shorthand symbols of the longer, more complete systems of motor activities and adjustments." In chap. xvi, from which this statement is quoted, the author has given, in a limpid style that characterizes the whole book, probably the simplest, clearest exposition of this standpoint anywhere to be found.

Reserving for the present certain queries as to the *interpretation* here given to the idea of mental function, let us ask whether the functional approach yields any immediate results. In regions where direct observation is impossible, the test of a scientific formula or method is efficiency as a tool for relating and systematizing facts. Judged by this standard, the new method brilliantly justifies itself. Never has a single key unlocked so many problems connected with early religious practices and ideas. Animism, totemism, taboo, magic, ritualism, sacrifice, myth—every one of these has been a focus of conflicting theories each of which, being built *ad hoc*, harbors uncritical psychological presuppositions. The solving word must come through a re-exam-

⁵ Among practical workers in religion there is a serious misconception of the whole method and significance of the psychology of religion. Seizing upon some fragment of science, and swallowing it without chewing or digesting it, various religious writers offer as psychology of religion strange mixtures of dogma, biology, and hearsay psychology. The climax is reached in diagrams of longitudinal or vertical sections of the spiritual life, with vents for the operations of the Holy Spirit duly indicated!

ination of these presuppositions. It is hardly too much to say that we now have this solving word. Conceiving the mental process in each case with reference to the advantage toward which it is directed, we ask what visible act is here performed, and under what circumstances it is performed or omitted or modified; then we note the relation of the act to the occupations and interesting experiences of early man—food-getting, war, marrying, birth, death, etc. Studying the act thus in its whole setting, we can usually discover a relation between it and the common interests of the group, specifically a relation to some advantage that is sought. Ames lays particular stress upon the ceremonial in early religions. When our sophisticated eyes look upon a tribal ceremony, we think that we are gazing upon something highly unpractical, a mere symbol, or dramatic rehearsal of some fantastic belief. But, applying the functional principle, we reverse this judgment. First, the savage is engaged in (to his mind) serious work, and in a direct way. The snake dance, for instance, is as much a part of an agricultural process as is plowing or sowing. Second, this seemingly far-fetched process turns out to be at its origin not a derivative from a belief rooted elsewhere but a spontaneous response to a present situation.

The act, not the idea, then, is the prius. The savage does not first infer the existence of spirits or gods from dreams and natural portents, and then seek to influence these superior powers by sacrifice, prayer, ceremony. Nor, on the other hand, is there a religious instinct or impulse that prompts to any specific religious belief or act. No; "*Im Anfang war die Tat*," and, as the beginning of religion is thus action, so its evolution is primarily a succession of active adjustments called out by the specific features of the environment. Thus the whole evolution of religion is connected with the same vital functions that occupy the attention of the biologist.

We need not be surprised if the earliest statements of this great principle contain something of excess or of defect. The very thing that seems to give us such facility in the explanation of the earlier forms of religion creates difficulty when we attempt a parallel analysis of religion as we know it. Ames has the courage to apply his method without flinching, however. In spite of current opinions to the contrary, the meaning of religion for us, he contends, is exhausted in a description of the particular adjustments that we are now endeavoring to make between ourselves and our fellows, and between ourselves and our physical environment. Accordingly, belief in God performs no function in our lives except as a symbol of our own adjustment reactions.

Let it be remembered that we are not dealing here with the old-fashioned psychology that, contenting itself with a description of the phenomenal order, granted to metaphysics or to faith the further function of ascertaining or reacting to real being. Ames specifically makes functional psychology of religion as he here presents it include and exhaust theology and the philosophy of religion.

Two questions will be sufficient to show just where this particular interpretation of functionalism leads. We may ask, in the first place, whether the facts of the most highly developed religious consciousness are illuminated or obscured by it. Is it true that the idea of God, instead of growing in richness and also vitality, tends to become faded and washed out as the development of society proceeds? Further, how shall we find out what the idea of God means to ourselves? Obviously we are not shut up to the methods of inference that are necessary in our study of the primitive mind. It is, of course, allowable for the psychologist to raise the question whether we really know what we are about. Motives are mixed and more or less obscure. Yet, in the progressive parts of our own population, religion is an ethical self-consciousness that is constantly called upon to make itself definite to itself. It probably knows what it essentially means when it asserts its faith in God. Progressive Christianity, because of neglect of the second great commandment in other days, today lays extreme emphasis upon practical love toward the brother whom we have seen. But it by no means follows that God has become for these Christians a mere symbol for social duties thus conceived. If Leuba claims, as he is supposed to have done, that Christians of today generally do not believe in God, but only use him, then a challenge as to the fact is in order. The fact is that we do not merely use either our God, or our friends, or ourselves. Only at a lower, and for us outgrown, stage of moral development is anything of the kind possible. The progressive Christian consciousness of today does place the stress upon society, but it thinks of society as including the dead as well as the living, and God as well as men; and it is concerned about the attitude that each of these has toward the others.⁶

⁶ Confusion often occurs as to what men believe and think and desire because a question is approached from the individualistic direction but answered from the social standpoint or vice versa. It is thus that men whose hearts are set upon the full triumph of the kingdom of God are "no longer interested in heaven," and that those who prize personality (socially conceived) above all else "do not desire immortality for themselves." In the same way the individualistic concept of God has ceased to be "a live issue." But when all such problems are put in a clearly social light, we find that society that reaches beyond the grave, and a God who really cares for men, are still very "live issues."

The reason why the functional view as it is here used obscures facts like these is not far to seek. The idea of function has turned our attention to ends of action, or to environmental stimuli to action, and away from the developing self-consciousness of men and women. Even if the primitive consciousness is wholly absorbed in the things that it seeks to obtain, such as food, it is not true that this is the universal form of conscious functioning. With self-consciousness, wherever and however it enters the evolutionary series, there arise what Professor Lovejoy has happily called "the desires of the self-conscious."⁷ "The self-conscious agent," he says, "not only chooses ends, but also contemplates himself as in the act of choosing and of realizing them; he is not merely a desirer of valuable goods to be attained through his action, but also a desirer of approvable qualities of the self to be manifested *in* his action." Society, it may be added—in the stricter sense of the term—first comes into being when such a self-conscious agent includes in his desires other self-conscious agents conceived in the same way. Now, there is no reason why a functional point of view might not fully recognize both the types of desire mentioned by Lovejoy. But "functional," taken as referring to "valuable goods" only, is a very different thing. Because functional psychology has thus far given little recognition to the "desires of the self-conscious," its treatment of the idea of society is often bewildering. It starts with the broadest assertions of the social nature of consciousness; it gets on swimmingly with its analysis of the less self-conscious types of social action; but when it contemplates such a social phenomenon as the effort which Christianity is making to reach a truly ideal social life, then its assumption as to what constitutes a function becomes distinctly cramping.⁸

The distinction just made between two levels or stages of function explains an interesting ambiguity in Ames's use of the term religion. At the outset religion is "the consciousness of the highest social values." Similar formulas appear repeatedly in the book. They seem to recognize "social values" as a genus, and "highest" as the differentia. But

⁷ See his article with this title in the *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods*, IV, No. 2 (January 17, 1907), 29-39.

⁸ In another place I have endeavored to show that, though religious value is not separate and distinct from social, ethical, aesthetic, and other values, it is nevertheless not simply identical with them. The religious aspect of these values is an immanent critique that requires their unification, organization, completion. The religious standpoint, we may say, is not that of *values*, but of *value*. In other terms, it is the insistence that the self-conscious life shall have meaning. See "Religious Value," *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods*, V, No. 10 (May 7, 1908).

it is hardly too much to say that the *differentia*, which should be the focus of greatest interest, is much neglected in the progress of the discussion. Religious consciousness appears to be identified with social consciousness as such, and as a consequence one is again and again tempted to wonder why the facts are alluded to as "religious experience." Certainly we are not told what constitutes "high" as distinguished from other social values. This lack of definition accounts also for an apparent inconsistency in the discussion of the religious growth of the individual. For, in spite of the social nature of human consciousness, and in spite of the religiousness of primitive men with their absorption in sensuous details and fragmentary interests, nevertheless "the infant is non-religious, non-moral, and non-personal" and, even in early childhood, "impulsive, sensuous reactions together with absorption in immediate details and fragmentary interests make it impossible for the child under nine years to pass beyond the non-religious and non-moral attitude to any considerable degree." His first spontaneous social interests are assumed to be those of the gang-forming age. But what of the social relations of the child in the family? It would seem that any tendency to identify the religious with the social consciousness must find large religious significance in family affection and in the child's self-identification with the family. A still more curious turn is given to the term religion in the argument that there are among us classes of non-religious persons. On one and the same page (356) we are told that "in primitive groups there could be no non-religious persons" because custom compelled conformity with the group, and also that religion is "participation in the ideal values of the social consciousness." The obvious fact here is that two levels of sociality are recognized without clear recognition of how the fact bears upon the notion of religion.

Since we are dealing with a fundamental question rather than a mere detail, it may not be hypercritical to point out that a parallel ambiguity exists in Ames's most general statement concerning the functional point of view. "Functional psychology views the mental life," he says, "(1) as an instrument of adaptation by which the organism adjusts itself to the environment; (3) this adjustment to the physical or social environment occurs through the psycho-physical organism."⁹ A later statement is that this adjustment is "in" the psycho-physical organism.¹⁰ Here the mental life appears both as an instrument whereby the organism adjusts itself, and also as a phase of the same organism; and the adjustment is wrought first by the organism

⁹ P. 15.

¹⁰ P. 18.

through the mental life, then *through* the psycho-physical organism, and finally *in* the psycho-physical organism. It is doubtful whether this shifting arises through any mere slip of the pen; for the whole set of statements faithfully reflects the difficulties inherent in the situation. When functionalism is taken to mean that mind is a mere instrument, it is as natural as can be that somewhere as we proceed we shall smuggle in the mind, no longer as a mere instrument, but as that which is being adjusted, and eke as an agent that is doing the work!¹¹

With reservation of this one critical scruple, however, the book may be said to represent a comprehensive undertaking admirably executed. Here is a splendid conception, doing effective work, but needing to be rounded out on one side. To the idea of function on the biological level (where the teleology is obscure and the ends are pre-moral) is to be added the idea of function on the level of the self-conscious ethical will.¹² Let us frankly acknowledge that functionalism in this sense makes mind more than a mere instrument. But it does not interfere with a thoroughly functional treatment of religious experience. For this reason the value of Ames's numberless analyses of special phenomena is by no means vacated. In addition to his illuminating treatment of ceremonial, magic, etc., as already indicated, he has cast new light upon the respective contributions of man and of woman to the social-religious consciousness; upon the derivation of the idea of spirits; upon the origin of prayer. And these are only samples of obscure matters that he has made less obscure. In respect to the economic factors that condition the general development of religion, the growth of religion in the individual, the phenomena of conversion

¹¹ That Ames's ambiguity is inherent in the point of view and not merely in his modes of expression is made still more probable from a precisely similar difficulty in King's *Development of Religion*. King derives religion from the "overt" activity of "psycho-physical organisms" responding to environmental conditions. Here the term "psycho-physical organism" conceals a problem that should be faced. For, if mind is merely instrumental, as King and Ames maintain, in what sense is the reacting organism "psycho-physical"? The term "psycho-physical organism" is harmless enough, and it has important uses. It becomes an instrument of confusion, however, when it conceals the contrast between an animal organism instinctively reaching out for food and a person consciously setting ends to himself.

¹² At the moment when biologists show a pronounced tendency to recognize the latent teleology in biological notions, and to inquire whether, after all, the "ends" involved in organic process must not be interpreted in the sense of a determinate guidance—at this moment psychologists are proposing to reduce the clear-cut teleology of the self-conscious mind to the obscurity of a quasi-biological "psycho-physical organism."

and of religious genius, the psychology of sects, and much more, he has given us a simple, clear, and fresh treatment. This is the first book in which the whole territory of the psychology of religion has been traversed. The author proves himself a most agreeable guide through the mountains and valleys of this difficult subject. His style is remarkably simple and direct, and the easy flow of it suggests the presence of an intellect as genial as it is bold and uncompromising.

This review should not close without describing at least one specific instance in which Ames's method and point of view illuminate an obscure problem. Let us take as our example his discussion of the derivation of the idea of spirits. The traditional view is that early men reached this notion by a process of logical inference from dreams, hallucinations, shadows, etc., and that afterward this full-fledged concept was used in an effort to understand the phenomena of external nature. But we have been convinced for some time that animism (in this, Tylor's sense of the term) could be reached only through a long antecedent development. There was an animism before that of Tylor; primitive thought was somehow pervasively anthropomorphic, yet without any notion of spirits. Why was it anthropomorphic, and how did this diffused quality of all early thought become focalized so that a distinction was made between spiritual and other existence? The solution of this problem begins with the fact that subject and object arise together in experience. The assumption that we first know ourselves, and then use this knowledge as an interpretation of objects, is simply a fallacy of the psychologist. It follows that at first objects share in what James describes as the "warmth and intimacy" of what we are accustomed to call our own states. Hence, at first all objects are alive. Even among ourselves emotional thinking tends to become anthropomorphic. This is the base line, so to say, of the whole matter. But objects that attracted particular attention, awakening unusual emotion, were especially alive. Thus at last we have a principle that resolves the old conflict between the theory of a primordial spiritism and the theory that makes nature-worship primary. The mind of early man focalizes its emotional thinking in both directions in accordance with a single law. Automatic seizures on the one hand, and natural portents on the other, betokened a particular spiritual presence primarily because they produced an unusual concentration of attention and of emotional interest.

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